



# Gallatin County, Montana

## National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI)

### Community Demonstration Project



#### Where Is Gallatin County and Why Is It Important?

Gallatin County, Montana, a gateway community to Yellowstone National Park, experienced a population growth between 1990 and 1999 of 26.5%. This rapid growth led to the expansion of county roads, the development of numerous subdivisions, and increased demand for community services. Gallatin County officials urged the public to become involved in planning a course of future county growth and development to address these issues.

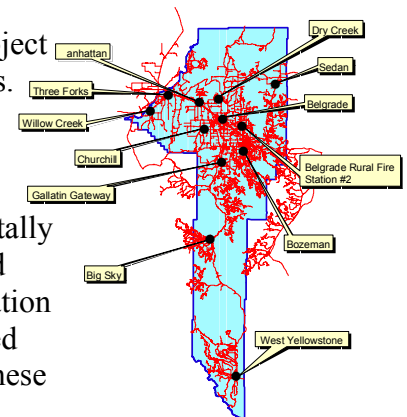
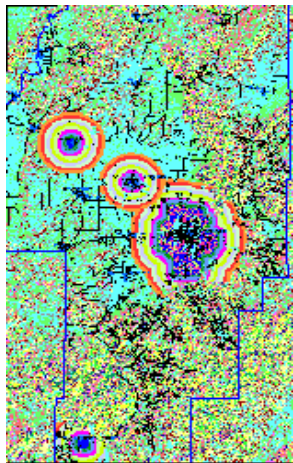


The County Planning Board and the County Commission initiated the Gallatin Plan program to define a collaborative and comprehensive land use policy for Gallatin County in order to support **Smart Growth**. The Plan's intention has been to be *environmentally smart*: protecting and enhancing the environment, air and water quality, and wildlife habitat; *fiscally smart*: paying for itself and providing high quality county services without constantly raising property taxes; and *economically and socially smart*: promoting community economic vitality, livability, resource efficiency, equity, and a sense of place.

#### What Has Been Accomplished By The Gallatin County Project?

The National Spatial Data Infrastructure (NSDI) Community Demonstration Project selected Gallatin County as a recipient of one of six demonstration project grants.

This funding enabled Gallatin County to use geographic information to facilitate public involvement in the planning process. The county planning office met with many Gallatin special interest and community groups to present *Gallatin Today*, a digitally rendered atlas of current county conditions. Using computerized Geographic Information Systems (GIS) combined with visualization technology, citizen groups defined and visualized their rule-based plans for land use and growth of the county to the year 2020. These "growth scenarios" form the basis of the Gallatin Master Plan.



Gallatin County was declared a "Reinvention Laboratory" of the National Performance Review. The Reinvention Laboratory status has facilitated the exploration and application of new and innovative approaches to facilitate an open collaborative process to share ideas, information, and technologies among federal and local government agencies and enable community-based planning efforts. The NSDI Gallatin County Community Demonstration Project serves as a "case study" for the type of role the Federal Government may serve to enable communities to understand and respond to the challenges they face, through the provision of information and geographic information tools. The results of the Gallatin County Demonstration Project and county planning effort continue to be shared with other communities as they seek to develop their own long-term comprehensive plans.

## Who Has Benefited From The Gallatin County Project?

“Participation in the NSDI program gave us the needed information at a critical point in the development of land use plans for Gallatin County, without which we would have been unable to attract the kind of expertise needed to solve long-standing issues of land use policy. The NSDI grant helped launch a dialogue about growth in Gallatin County by expressing for the first time in a visual way the outcomes of policy choices facing the County.” Steve Forrest, Chairman, Gallatin County Planning Board



The NSDI Gallatin County Community Demonstration Project promoted the sharing of ideas, information, and technologies and demonstrated the benefits of applying NSDI compliant data standards and a data clearinghouse to encourage data sharing and inter-operability of the data among different jurisdictions and other partners. Geospatial information informed citizens about growth impacts and opportunities; illustrated growth management options; and facilitated consensus on land use plans for Gallatin County.

New computer and communication technologies, combined with increased access and use of both Federal and local data created opportunities for designing, developing, conveying, and implementing the Gallatin Plan. Innovative approaches to compile and view GIS information about Gallatin County through the use of newly emerging technologies (decision support tools) assisted the County in developing an informed decision process that engaged a broad spectrum of citizens in the planning process. Gallatin County serves as a pilot site for the Aurora Partnership, a public-private collaboration whose goal is to stimulate the development and application of the next generation of decision support tools, systems, and services for place-based decision making. A digital atlas of Gallatin County was a product of this collaborative effort.



## Who Are The Partners In The Gallatin County Project?

In collaboration with the Commissioners, Planning Board, County Offices, and citizens of Gallatin County, the U.S. Department of the Interior's U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Montana State University, and the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) served as partners to enable the county to develop the Gallatin Plan. Further, the National Association of Counties has expressed interest in having Gallatin serve as a pilot study for county planning efforts throughout the country that seek to employ GIS as a means to facilitate county planning efforts. The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities (a partnership of the National Association of Counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors) has provided a modest technical assistance grant to Gallatin County for this program.

## Key Contacts

### **Local:**

Lanette Windemaker, AICP  
Gallatin County Planning Department  
Bozeman, MT 59715  
406.582.3130  
lwindemaker@co.gallatin.mt.us

### **Federal:**

Paul Dresler  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20002  
202.208.3047  
Paul\_Dresler@ios.doi.gov